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Washington Letter

(From Our Regular Correspondent.)

NEW GERMAN CRISIS:—Another crisis with Germany, one manufactured at the White House but no less capable of serious results for that reason, is now agitating those who have the peace and the good name of this country at heart. Prompted by a determination to achieve something which might promote his political fortunes, President Wilson caused Secretary Lansing to propose to the neutral and allied powers of Europe that all merchant ships should abandon the timehonored practice of carrying arms designed for self-defense, and even suggested that this country might decline to admit to her ports or permit to depart therefrom any vessel so armed. And this proposal was made with, apparently, no realization of the difficulties attending the alteration of international law in time of war and no recollection that this Government had as recently as November, 1914, put itself on record in opposition to such a plan. Germany, naturally inspired by the belief that, in view of this Government's having made this proposal, it would be in heavy accord with it, notified the United States that after this month, while refraining from sinking unarmed passengers and crew an opportunity to escape, it would treat every armed vessel, even if armed only for self-defense as a belligerent vessel and sink it without warning. This announcement was obviously pleasing to Mr. Wilson, who caused inspired newspaper dispatches to be written saying that the Administration cordially approved Germany's position. On February 15th however, Senator Sterling introduced a resolution protesting against Germany's purpose and calling attention to unequivocal assertions of this Administration, dated September 26 and November 7, 1914, that under fixed principles of international law merchant ships were entitled to carry sufficient armament for self-protection and did not, thereby, forfeit anything of the rights or character of merchant ships, and to the further declaration of President Wilson, of May 13, 1915, that "American citizens were within their undisputed rights in taking their (the belligerent's) ships and in traveling wherever their legitimate business calls them on the high seas."

ADMINISTRATION'S SOMERSAULT:—On February 18th Senators Lodge and Sterling addressed the Senate on this subject, citing the authorities and and quoting Mr. Wilson's various official declaration on the subject. Senator Sterling charged that "the German Admiralty was encouraged if not invited by the memoranda of the State Department" to adopt a policy which "involves consequences more serious than any that have yet disturbed us, grave as some of them have been." Immediately following this exposure of its reckless inconsistency, the Administration turned a somersault, reversed its position and caused it to become known that it would not agree to Germany's plan. From Germany have come explicit, if not actually official, declarations that the German Admiralty is determined to pursue the course it had outlined, that it regards the change of face of the United States as distinctly unfriendly, and it will neither defer its orders to German submarine commanders nor engage in delaying negotiations with this country. Apparently this country, therefore, faces the alternative of a humiliating backdown or of severing diplomatic relations with Germany, with possibly much graver consequences.

WRITHES UNDER ROOT SPEECH:—It is evident to all observers that President Wilson is writhing under Senator Root's speech and is the more desperate because of the avowed opposition of former Secretary Bryan. Mr. Wilson has summoned a number of Democratic Senators to the White House and has implored them to devote their best efforts to defending him against Mr. Root's scathing indictment. Those who have talked to the president describe him in private conversation, as despondent and some of them are seriously concerned lest he do something desperate in an effort to retrieve his political fortunes. Hardly had Mr. Root concluded his great arraignment when Mr. Bryan delivered an address at Tampa, Fla., where he is spending the winter, attacking the President's preparedness policy and intimating that Mr. Wilson was under the domination of the interests which sell munitions and armament, and Speaker Clark made a public speech in which he said that "the people who are trying to pull us into the foreign war and the persons who do not want to fight, no matter what the provocation, are both detrimental to the republic" and that he would like to take them both by the nape of the neck and put them into the European trenches." Then from various quarters close to Mr. Bryan came reports that "The Commoner" would make a determined fight against Mr. Wilson at St. Louis because of his repudiation of the one term plank in the Baltimore platform. Altogether, Mr. Wilson finds the path of a politically ambitious bridegroom strewn with anything but roses.

PARDON BEARS FRUIT:—Attention was called recently to President Wilson's reckless pardoning of two Oklahoma officials convicted of fraud in trying to deprive the negroes of that State of right to vote, under the infamous "grandfather clause" of the State Constitution, a pardon issued immediately after the Supreme Court had affirmed the guilt of the men and which was accepted as designed to encourage the State legislature to devise some other means of depriving the colored voters of the suffrage. Now come reports from Oklahoma that when the Legislature met the Democratic majorities immediately undertook to devise such legislation and that during the vote in the Oklahoma House of Representatives there occurred a free fight in which Arthur H. Geissler, Republican State Chairman, was knocked insensible and others injured. Reports from Oklahoma indicate that, with confidence that the courts cannot punish them as long as Mr. Wilson retains the pardoning power there is no limit to which the Oklahoma Democrats will not go in their determination to keep the colored voters from the polls.

THE ISSUES OF THE CAMPAIGN:—Ex-Senator Root's speech before the New York Republican Convention has clearly defined the issues of the Presidential campaign that he who runs may read. These are Democratic tariff legislation and a hostility to business prosperity which produced seriously hard times that were only temporarily abated by the outbreak of the European War; a Mexican policy actuated by hatred of Huerta, of Mexico, which led President Wilson to "butt in" in the Mexican situation to the extent of invading Vera Cruz and sacrificing eleven American and 300 Mexican lives; to align this Government with the bandits who were almost daily murdering American men, outraging American women and destroying untold millions of American property; to adopt a partisanship in Mexican affairs which induced Mr. Wilson to refrain from anything but hollow protests against the outrages perpetrated on Americans; a foreign policy characterized by first shaking the fist at foreign nations violating American rights, and later shaking the finger at them, a policy which has resulted in no flag being so dishonored and no citizenship as little worth claiming as ours. As Mr. Root pointed out, within four days after the sinking of the Lusitania, and while Americans were still mourning for the relatives and friends who had gone down in her, President Wilson in a public speech proclaimed to the world that "a man may be too proud to fight," and whatever he may now say he meant by it, the phrase has become a byword of derision for the Government of the United States." During the early days of the war, when little Switzerland and neutral little Holland were mobilizing their military forces as a warning that their neutrality must not be violated,

Mr. Wilson was exerting his power as President to forestall and prevent military preparedness and sneering at those who urged that at least this country make a careful survey of its military resources; and only now, when the opinion that we should no longer remain defenseless has become public opinion and insistent and even peremptory has President Wilson—not leading but following—shifted his ground and asked Congress to make some adequate preparation for national defense. And even now, Mr. Wilson's Democratic colleagues, perplexed by his change of attitude, are unwilling to adopt his newly adopted ideas. The assembling of a Cabinet of small men, chosen not for their ability to serve the nation but for their usefulness in promoting the political ambition of the newly-elected President to harmonize the factions in his party and insure for himself a second term, will constitute one of the important issues, and it will be pointed out that, with only two strong men in the entire Cabinet, Garrison and Lane, the first was compelled to resign and the second has been placed in position where his strength must prove of least avail to the nation as a whole. Senator Root's speech was a true keynote of the campaign and, while it was singularly free from personalities, it effectively portrayed Woodrow Wilson as a man of infinite smallness who, in the confidence of his overweening conceit has surrounded himself with a Cabinet composed of men as inefficient as they are narrow.

AT GARRISON'S DOOR:—Officers and clerks on coming to work in the War department yesterday were surprised to see a notice on the door of the Secretary of war it read, "Lindley M. Garrison placed principle above political expediency. Of course, he could not remain in Woodrow Wilson's Cabinet." As soon as some of the senior officers arrived it was torn down but not until hundreds had read it.

WILSON REPUDIATES PLEDGE:—"Our platform is not molasses to catch flies. It means business. It is the utterance of earnest and honest men who intend to do business along those lines, and who are not waiting to see whether they are going to act on them or not." So spoke Woodrow Wilson, addressing a political meeting on August 15, 1912, just one month after his nomination for President.

"Our platform is one of principles which we believe to be essential to our national welfare. Our pledges are made to be kept in office, as well as relied on during the campaign." So read the Democratic national platform on which Mr. Wilson had been nominated. And that platform contained this pledge: "We favor a single Presidential term, and to that end urge the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution making the President of the United States ineligible for re-election, and we pledge the candidate of this convention to this principle."

"In order, therefore, to satisfy the technical requirements of the statutes of the State of Ohio, I hereby consent to the use of my name as a candidate for the Presidency by any candidate who seeks to be elected a delegate to the Democratic National Convention which is to assemble in June." So wrote Woodrow Wilson on January 14, 1916, to Chas. Q. Hilderbrandt, Secretary of State for Ohio. So clearly is Mr. Wilson convicted by his own words that no comment is necessary.

A SCATHING ARRAIGNMENT:—It is doubtful if ever before a President of the United States was subjected to so scathing an arraignment as was President Wilson by Elihu Root, in opening the New York Republican Convention. Dignity, incisiveness, forceful and pitiless logic and a complete absence of violence or even extravagance made Mr. Root's indictment so terrible that the Administration is today fairly writhing under it and Democrats in Congress are prone to admit in private conversation, that the former Senator from New York has so mercilessly exposed the clay feet of this idol as to

render his rehabilitation a herculean task. In a single chapter, Mr. Root laid bare the woeful inefficiency of the Democratic party, the characteristic and temperamental unfitness of Woodrow Wilson for his high office and the long array of deplorable and humiliating blunders which have resulted from entrusting the Government of a great nation to such incompetents. "The sad part of Mr. Root's indictment is that every word of it is true," said a prominent and lifelong Democrat, today "We Democrats, however loyal, cannot answer it. We must devote our efforts to trying to distract public attention from it."

Suppressing Facts Regarding Mexico

After many weeks delay Mr. Wilson declined to make answer to the Senate's demand for information regarding affairs in Mexico. When Senator Fall first formulated his requests for the facts, early in the session, there was a disposition among Democrats to smother the resolution in committee; but as this method seemed too transparent and too dangerous, the administration forces made a fine show of bravery, asserted that there was nothing to be concealed in the Mexican business, and the resolution was passed without opposition.

At length the reply came—in the form of a letter from Secretary Lansing, who, writhing at the President's orders, declares that is "incompatible with the public interest" to make known much of the material which the Senate asked for. Among these hidden facts are the orders under which our forces entered upon the ill-starred expedition to Vera Cruz and the correspondence sent to the State Department by the Brazilian Minister in Mexico while he was in charge of our interests there.

But the outstanding fact which Mr. Wilson could not deny to the Senate and to the country is contained in Mr. Lansing's "watchful waiting" began its deadly work and that 36 others—among them 16 American soldiers—have been killed on American soil by bands of invaders.

In the face of these gruesome details Mr. Wilson has the hardihood to tell the Senate that there is in Mexico "reasonably adequate protection to the lives and property of Americans, and that Carranza is maintaining as good a government down there as anyone ought to expect."

Fortunately the files of the State Department are not the only place in which to find authentic information regarding conditions in Mexico. Senator Fall who introduced the resolution of inquiry and who was careful to draft his demands to cover the essential points in such inquiry, already has authenticated information covering much of the ground which Mr. Wilson seeks to surround with secrecy. This information will be given to the country by means of debate in the Senate; and Mr. Wilson will find that he cannot hoodwink the country as to the fruits of his disastrous Mexican policy.

The trouble with President Wilson as an advocate of preparedness or any other policy is that the people do not give him credit for sincerity. For more than a year the White House was giving stories of "acute crises," which were regularly succeeded by "diplomatic triumphs." After a year of that sort of thing, people were naturally not in a good frame of mind to take Mr. Wilson seriously when he went out on the stump and told them that he "knew not what an hour may bring forth." Most people, in their childhood, learned the tragic story of the boy who called "Wolf!" "Wolf!" when there was no wolf.

"Having known Jo Daniels for forty years, we are prepared to say that he has enough tar on his heels not to jar loose because of a few funny little knocks of mosquito-crushing momentum."—George M. Bailey in Houston "Post". Quite right. Nothing short of the national election that is coming next year will jar Josephus from the payroll.

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